REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in the present application. Claims 24-26 have been added. Claims 1, 10, and 19 are independent and have been amended. Support for the amendments and new claims 24-26 can be found, *inter alia*, on pages 7 and 13 of the Specification.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kubo et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,636,216) in view of Huggins et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,198,744). Applicants respectfully traverse.

With regard to claim 1, Applicants assert that Kubo et al. and Huggins et al., separately or in any proper combination, fail to disclose or suggest an asynchronous feeder multiplexer adapted to . . . replace the components of the signals on the first path with copies of components of signals running in an opposite direction on a second path of the ring such that at any location in the network both paths provide all signals as recited in claim 1.

Instead, Kubo et al. disclose at Col. 16, lines 6-48, a conversion that takes place within an ATM interface wherein an "x" element is converted into a "y" element. The "y" element is then sent only to ATM terminal 13a as shown in FIG. 30 where the "y" element terminates. The "y" element is not put on a path traveling on the opposite direction of "x" such that at any location in the network both paths provide all signals. Furthermore, the VPI/VCI value that is converted in the conversion process is derived from a VPI/VCI conversion table 39h and is

not a copy of components of signals running in opposite directions. Copying a VPI/VCI value from an incoming signal and then placing the copied value onto an outgoing signal is contrary to the disclosure of Kubo et al. which uses a table to convert a VPI/VCI value to a converted value. Therefore, Kubo et al. cannot disclose or suggest an asynchronous feeder multiplexer adapted to . . . replace the components of the signals on the first path with copies of components of signals running in an opposite direction on a second path of the ring such that at any location in the network both paths provide all signals as recited in claim 1.

Huggins et al. is directed to an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) based very high bit rate digital subscriber line communication system and method. Huggins et al. discloses an information provider that communicates with central offices through a single optical ring. The central offices are also configured to statistically multiplex multiple data signals from host digital terminals into a single data signal for transmission to the information provider via the optical ring. However, Huggins et al. also fail to disclose or suggest an element to replace components of a signal as in claim 1. Instead, as disclosed in FIGs. 4D and 4E and the discussion thereof, if a cell is destined for a particular node, the cell is terminated at the node. Applicants assert that the termination of Huggins et al. is not the same as replacing. Therefore, Huggins et al. cannot disclose or suggest an asynchronous feeder multiplexer adapted to . . . replace the components of the signals on the first path with copies of components of signals running in an opposite direction on a second path of the ring such that at any location in the network both paths provide all signals as recited in claim 1.

In view of the above comments, Applicants advance that claim 1 is not rendered obvious to one skilled in the art by Kubo et al. in view of Huggins et al.

With regard to independent claims 10 and 19, claims 10 and 19 include similar limitations to claim 1 and are at least allowable for the reasons stated for claim 1.

With regard to dependent claims 2-9 and 11-18, and 20-23, Applicants assert that they are allowable at least because they depend from one of independent claims 1, 10, and 19.

Applicants respectfully request that the art grounds of rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1-26 are patentable over the relied upon references, and that the application as a whole is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

In the event that any matters remain at issue in the application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 668-8000 in the Northern Virginia area, for the purpose of a telephonic interview.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.

By _____

Gary R. Yacura
Reg. No. 35,416

P.O. Box 8910
Reston, VA 20195
(703) 668-8000

GDY/RFS:ewd